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Pat Marsella-Herrick Named Station Employee of the Year

by John Zakour

Geneva, NY

One of the highlights of last month's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station Club Banquet was the awarding of Experiment Station Employee of the Year to the Department of Entomology's Pat Marsella-Herrick. For this honor, Marsella-Herrick received a plaque denoting her accomplishment, gift certificates from the Cornell Bookstore and Banfi's at the Statler, a dozen roses, and the highly coveted Employee of the Year parking space – any parking space she desires. She also received some special parking tickets to put on the windshields of cars who violate her parking space.



Marsella-Herrick's relationship with the Experiment Station began very casually. In 1974, while attending Auburn Community College (now Cayuga County Community College) she visited the Station on a field trip. While here, she completed an employment application, never dreaming that this would lead to over 23 years of affiliation with the Experiment

Station. Upon graduation, Marsella-Herrick was hired by Bill Bowers, and she worked in his lab until August of 1984. She spent a year with Dave Soderlund and then moved to her current position as a Research Support Specialist in Doug Knipple's lab.

In Knipple's lab, Marsella-Herrick coordinates the day-to-day operations. She designs and conducts molecular biology experiments to help carry out Knipple's project goals, she helps train graduate students and visiting scientists in molecular

biology procedures and techniques, and she is also responsible for supervising and training individuals in the use of the advanced molecular genetics instrumentation (DNA Synthesizer and Automated Sequencer) in the lab, which is used by researchers on and off campus. She refers to herself as "sort of a lab Mom".

"Pat is truly a lifelong learner," said Knipple. "When she began working for me more than a decade ago, she had no background in molecular biology. At the present time I consider her technical capabilities in this area to be of the same caliber as some of the best trained postdoctoral fellows in our organization." Besides her technical skills, Knipple also commended Marsella-Herrick for her people skills, noting, "Pat is an extremely warm, thoughtful and easygoing person who exudes personal concern for the people around her and easily rises above the complex personal and political situations that occur all too frequently in laboratory environments. She has been invaluable to me in this respect."

The diversity and challenge of her work is enjoyable for Marsella-Herrick. Since she does not have formal training in molecular biology, when problems pop-up, she relies on her years of experience and the available literature to help her solve them. She finds that this gives her the opportunity to learn something new and interesting almost on a daily basis.

Marsella-Herrick feels sincerely honored to have been chosen Employee of the Year. "To be acknowledged in this way for doing your job is just incredible," she said.

On the personal side, Marsella-Herrick is married to Phil Herrick, and they have two sons: Brian, age 13, and Kevin, age 9. She loves sports and is one of the finest athletes at the Station. During the early '80s she played shortstop and anchored Entomology's championship softball team. For the last seven years, though, her spare time has been taken by her heavy involvement with the Geneva Lakefront Childcare Center and the effort to build its new facility. Now that this is complete, Pat plans to spend more time working on her golf game, gardening, traveling with her family, hanging out at home on Seneca Lake, and maybe even starting an over 40 women's softball league!

NOTE TO EDITORS: [Photo](#) can be downloaded at 300 ppi from the Experiment Station's Web site. If you would like a hard copy of the photo, contact Rob Way at 315-787-2357, or email rhw2@cornell.edu

Click on above photo for 300 ppi versions.

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